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Reorientation of United Nations activities in the field of public information and communications

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report details the significant progress being made to reposition the Department of Public Information to meet the communications challenges of the Organization with a renewed focus and greater clarity of purpose. It builds upon the previous reorientation report (A/AC.198/2002/2), which offered a preliminary outline of the findings of the comprehensive review of the management and operations of the Department, as well as possible strategic actions to be taken as a result.

The present report details the next phase of the departmental reform and sets out the steps being taken to implement the actions contained in the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change (A/57/387 and Corr.1), as they apply to the Department.

The new mission statement for the Department, which will be its guiding precept, as well as its revised operating model and the new organizational structure based upon it, are set out in the report. The key elements of the structure are a Strategic Communications Division, which will devise and disseminate United Nations messages around priority United Nations themes; an Outreach Division to encompass services to delegations, liaison with civil society and activities for the general public; and a News and Media Division that has, among other things, been strengthened by the creation of a new Internet Service, which will enhance the Division's ability to communicate with media around the world on important news development in the United Nations system. The report further details a new operating concept for the United Nations information centres around regional hubs and the intention to redeploy resources which would be freed as a result to areas of higher priority, including centres in developing countries, the United Nations web site and the systematic evaluation of the impact of the Department's activities.

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The report concludes that the Department of Public Information has worked with a renewed sense of mission under its reformed structure since 1 November 2002. At the same time, the guidance of the Committee on Information is being sought for the next phase of departmental reform, as is its support for the public information section of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005, which reflects the Department's new priorities.

I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 8 of its resolution 57/130 B of 11 December 2002, the General Assembly encouraged the Secretary-General to continue the reorientation of United Nations activities in the field of public information and communications, including wide-ranging and possibly new and innovative proposals and to report thereon to the Committee on Information at its twenty-fifth session. In paragraph 14, it noted the intention of the Secretary-General to conduct a comprehensive review of the management and operations of the Department of Public Information, taking into account the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005, and to report thereon at its fifty-seventh session in accordance with its resolution 56/253 of 24 December 2001, and recognized that the comprehensive review of the Department is intended to facilitate the process of reorientation. Furthermore, in paragraph 15, the Assembly requested the Committee on Information to examine thoroughly the comprehensive review once it has been finalized and to submit its recommendations thereon to the Assembly.

2. In paragraph 20, the General Assembly also emphasized that, through its reorientation, the Department of Public Information should maintain and improve its activities in the areas of special interest to developing countries and, where appropriate, other countries with special needs, including countries in transition, and that such reorientation contributes to bridging the existing gap between the developing and the developed countries in the crucial field of public information and communications.

3. It should also be noted that in several paragraphs of its resolution 57/130 B, the General Assembly called on the Department to provide specific information to the Committee on Information in the context of the present report. In that connection, in paragraph 38, the Secretary-General was requested to provide the results of the ongoing review by the Office of Internal Oversight Services of the Secretariat regarding the United Nations information centres, as well as information on the involvement of the Department of Public Information in the United Nations houses initiative. In paragraph 59, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to include in his comprehensive review the relevant results of the larger review of United Nations publications and information materials called for in its resolution 56/253. Regarding the latter request, the preliminary findings have been summarized in chapter II.C of the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change (A/57/387 and Corr.1) under the sub-heading "Improving oversight of publications", and a further report will be submitted to the Assembly by mid-2003.

4. In paragraph 66, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report on the most practical, efficient and cost-effective means of implementing his proposal to translate into all official languages all English materials and databases on the United Nations web site by the respective content-providing offices of the Secretariat. In paragraph 67, it requested the Secretary-General to include in his report proposals relating to the designation of a date by which all supporting arrangements would be in place for the implementation of that concept. In paragraph 70, the Assembly noted that the High-Level Committee on Management had requested its Technical Adviser to prepare and submit to it a preliminary study on one central Internet portal for the United Nations system. In paragraph 74, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report on the impact on the

functioning of the Official Document System (ODS) following implementation of the full multilingual support function and on the feasibility of providing free, public access to the System through a linkage with the United Nations web site. The information on the portal and the ODS is contained in annex II to the present report.

5. Moreover, the General Assembly, in paragraph 15 of its resolution 57/300 of 20 December 2002 on strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change, requested the Secretary-General to submit a progress report on the implementation of his proposal to rationalize the network of United Nations information centres around regional hubs, where appropriate, and in paragraph 17 requested him to report on progress made to conduct a systematic evaluation of the impact, efficiency and cost-effectiveness of all activities of the Department of Public Information. On 10 January 2003, it was decided at a meeting of the Bureau of the Committee on Information that that information would be presented to the Committee at its twenty-fifth session as part of the present report.

II. Comprehensive review — status of implementation

6. In his report on reorientation to the Committee on Information at its twenty-fourth session (A/AC.198/2002/2), reflecting the first stage of the comprehensive review, the Secretary-General set out his vision for the direction in which he hoped to take a transformed Department of Public Information — one with a renewed focus and a greater clarity of purpose. The Committee discussed in detail the preliminary outline of the principal issues and findings emerging from the comprehensive review, as well as the strategic actions being considered by the Department as a result.

7. The Secretary-General took the process further in his reform report, in which he identified the Department of Public Information as one area to be reviewed in greater detail in the course of strengthening the United Nations. The Secretary-General's report contains the principal conclusions of the comprehensive review conducted on the management and operations of the Department of Public Information.

8. In the report, it is explained that the Department of Public Information has suffered from a fragmentation of its efforts as a result of too many mandates and missions and is being restructured to be better able to develop coherent communications strategies and take advantage of new media and communications technologies. A comprehensive evaluation of the impact of all of the Department's activities will be carried out over the next three years. The existing network of United Nations information centres will be rationalized around regional hubs, starting with Western Europe, and the Secretary-General will also introduce improvements in the management of United Nations libraries and the Secretariat's publications programme.

9. Subsequently, the General Assembly, in paragraph 11 of its resolution 57/300, welcomed the proposals of the Secretary-General to improve the effective and targeted delivery of public information activities, including the restructuring of the Department of Public Information, and provided some additional guidelines.

10. The present report describes the steps being taken to implement the actions in the Secretary-General's reform report which apply to the Department of Public

Information. Section III sets out the new mission statement for the Department, which will be a guiding precept for all its work, and presents the new operating model chosen to reposition the Department. Section IV describes a new operating concept for the United Nations information centres around regional hubs and the proposal to redeploy resources which would be freed as a result to areas of higher priority, including centres in developing countries, the United Nations web site and the systematic evaluation of the impact of the Department's activities.

III. Repositioning the Department of Public Information

11. To help clarify the goals and purposes of the Department of Public Information and to enhance its overall effectiveness and efficiency, a clear mission statement has now been formulated, as follows:

> *"The Department of Public Information's mission is to help fulfil the substantive purposes of the United Nations by strategically communicating the activities and concerns of the Organization to achieve the greatest public impact."*

The statement recognizes that the Department's work is not an end in itself and that the information which the Department must communicate is generated by the substantive work of the Organization and its component parts. The Department must therefore manage and coordinate information from various United Nations sources with a view to conveying it to the public. The intention is that the Department will work strategically, emphasizing the broader picture, with the Organization's overall goals in mind. Though the mission statement does not spell it out, the Department will use appropriate intermediaries as necessary in order to leverage its activities and achieve the greatest public impact.

12. In adhering to its new mission statement, the Department of Public Information will be guided by the priorities laid down by the General Assembly and those established by the Secretary-General at the beginning of his second term of office. The Department's core "message", with the United Nations Millennium Declaration as its guide, will focus on: the eradication of poverty, conflict prevention, sustainable development, human rights, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the battle against international terrorism and the needs of the African continent. The Department must enhance its expertise in regard to those issues, in cooperation with the relevant substantive Secretariat departments and offices and organizations of the United Nations system, and establish the capacity to devise and implement communications strategies to promote the work of the United Nations in those areas. In addition, the Department must be equipped to respond to unpredictable and fast-moving events around the world by providing information services to the media, Member States, non-governmental organizations and the public on United Nations actions in those critical situations. Finally, the Department will continue to pay special attention to ensure that gender mainstreaming is incorporated into the design of public information products and activities.

13. To fulfil its mission, it has been indicated in the comprehensive review that the Department of Public Information must continue to disseminate the United Nations message through a variety of communications means, taking into account the needs of its various target audiences. They should include the traditional means of communication, inter alia, print materials, ranging from press releases to hard cover

publications, radio programmes (especially live broadcasts) and television materials, as well as Internet material on www.un.org and associated sites, notably the United Nations News Centre and those of The UN Works programme and the *UN Chronicle*. However, the level of the resources allocated to each function will be readjusted as part of a process of continuing review.

14. As an embodiment of the mission of the Department of Public Information, the Secretary-General has approved a new operating model for the Department. It is based on a clear conception of the Department's role and an elaboration of its functions in a manner that emphasizes the Organization's communications needs, while also providing the expected services to Member States. That model further recognizes that content generation emanates from the other departments and offices of the Secretariat and organizations of the United Nations system, while content coordination and refinement, as well as content presentation and distribution, are the responsibility of the Department, working in close cooperation with the media, Member States and civil society partners.

15. A new organizational structure for the Department of Public Information, based on the revised operating model, which includes a Strategic Communications Division, a News and Media Division and an Outreach Division, was put into effect as of 1 November 2002. It should be noted that the Office of the Spokesman for the Secretary-General remains administratively within, and works in close synergy with, the Department of Public Information, although it continues to report directly to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General.

A. Strategic Communications Division

16. The Strategic Communications Division has been established to devise and disseminate United Nations messages centred around priority themes. It is staffed by communications professionals who specialize in the substantive areas of the Organization's work and function in close cooperation with the relevant substantive departments and offices. The Division develops communications strategies to promote the work of the United Nations on priority issues, using the United Nations Millennium Declaration as its guide. In order to integrate the United Nations information centres into the Organization's communications strategy, the Information Centres Service and the network of information centres, services and information components of United Nations Offices have become an integral part of the new Division. A Committee Liaison Unit, which includes the secretariats of the Committee on Information and of the United Nations Communications Group, is also part of the Division. The former Public Affairs Division has been abolished and its functions divided between the new Division and the new Outreach Division detailed below.

17. The Strategic Communications Division is tasked with ensuring that communications is placed at the heart of the strategic management of the United Nations. The activities and programmes of the Department of Public Information will succeed only if the Secretariat as a whole reflects the Secretary-General's desire to create a culture of communications within the Organization.

18. The Division functions as the secretariat of the United Nations Communications Group, the new mechanism for inter-agency coordination in the field of public information and communications, which replaced the Joint United

Nations Information Committee. The Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information chairs its weekly meetings at Headquarters. Those meetings bring together communications professionals from within the United Nations Secretariat and the wider system to share common communications concerns and to develop joint strategies, thereby enabling the United Nations system to speak increasingly with one voice when conveying its core messages. In a related measure, the head of the Department is also the Chairman of an inter-agency task force to ensure a coordinated, coherent and, above all, strategic approach to the system's public information work on the situation in Iraq.

19. Strengthened coordination between the Department of Public Information and other Secretariat departments is essential for the development of an effective United Nations outreach to the world public. The Strategic Communications Division exists primarily to undertake that task and to serve as the interface with the other Secretariat departments. To serve each client office, the Division has identified a focal point in one of the four sections of the Communications Campaign Service, which cover development; Palestine, decolonization and human rights; peace and security; and Africa. It will be the job of the focal point to be knowledgeable on the priority issues and activities of the client office. The Department of Public Information will hold an annual meeting with each client department, at the head of department level, to outline the year's activities and to decide on communications priorities. The meetings will be preceded by meetings at the working level to elaborate creative briefs for each client office. The focal points, in close collaboration with the client offices, and on the basis of the annual meeting, will identify the target audiences and develop the information programme and media strategy for each priority issue. That will be communicated to the other divisions of the Department of Public Information and to the United Nations system through the United Nations Communications Group.

20. The thematic promotional campaigns will be implemented using all the Department's assets, including its multimedia outlets (print, radio, television, Internet), outreach to civil society, private sector partnerships and, at the local level, the United Nations information centres. That successful approach was used by the Department during the past few years to promote major United Nations global conferences. A new issue-driven communications strategy for each department, rather than one which is event-driven, is being developed to promote the Organization's work, building on the experience and success of the global conferences campaigns.

21. In addition, the ongoing activities included in the programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 will be implemented, including the publication of the quarterly magazine *Africa Recovery* in English and French, which will now serve as one of the outputs of a new Africa Section, devoted to promoting Africa's development. Other continuing mandated activities include the annual Palestinian media practitioners training programme, the annual international media seminar on peace in the Middle East, the annual *Year in Review* publication about United Nations peace operations and the updating of current publications on various thematic issues.

22. Information and operational support for the information component of field missions will continue to be a core function of the Peace and Security Section, including assisting missions in the creation and updating of their web sites, assistance in training, the creation of information tools and the promotion of

missions through outreach to the international media. Planning for the information component of new missions, in particular the development of a rapid deployment capability, is a continuing focus for the Section. For instance, it helped design the information sector of the logistic headquarters of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in Brindisi, Italy, and is planning a conference this year for organizations interested in rapid deployment to assist media during humanitarian crises and in conflict areas.

23. The Department is also contributing to conflict prevention work, currently in the case of Côte d'Ivoire, where it has sent an information officer to begin work with local media and United Nations Offices to reduce hate speech. The Department has undertaken media monitoring and will deploy an information officer as part of the United Nations assessment team to analyse the way forward in terms of resolving the current crisis.

24. As requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 57/238 of 20 December 2002 on the World Summit on the Information Society, the Department of Public Information is cooperating closely with the International Telecommunication Union to launch a public information campaign to raise global awareness of the Summit, within existing resources and through voluntary contributions. The campaign aims to underscore how communications technologies can help the world attain the Millennium Development Goals. The Department will contribute to the first phase of the Summit, to be held in Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2003, by organizing a side event, the World Electronic Media Forum, on the role of the electronic media in the information society. The Forum is being organized in partnership with the television industry and Switzerland, which has already made a sizeable contribution to its organization, and will bring together media executives and practitioners from developed and developing countries, as well as other policy makers and representatives of the United Nations system.

25. As mentioned in paragraph 16, the Division includes the Information Centres Service, which manages the administrative, programme and dissemination functions of the global network of United Nations information centres. The centres, services and information components of United Nations Offices work through intermediaries, such as the media and local partners, to adapt global communications strategies to local audiences. The new approach to the management of the information centres is described in detail in section IV below (see paras. 39-46).

B. News and Media Division

26. The central objective of the News and Media Division is the delivery, in real time, of accurate, objective and balanced news and information to the media and other audiences worldwide. The Division is carrying out that objective in the context of the Internet-driven 24-hour news cycle, through the immediate dissemination in all four mass media — print, radio, television and Internet — of news emanating from the United Nations system. Such rapid dissemination of authoritative information materials is essential if we are to meet our goal of projecting to the media the centrality of the United Nations as it deliberates and takes action on the compelling issues of our time.

27. To that end, the Division is developing new synergies to use the full potential of all available channels of communication — both new and traditional — so that

they can meet the varied and constantly growing demands of its users. The creation of an Internet Service, comprised of the News Services and the Website Sections, has greatly facilitated the new approach. Television and photo systems are being modernized through a conversion to digital technology and the development of an integrated production system. At the same time, the opportunities provided by the Internet — including increasingly in the developing world — are being realized through the development of a fully multimedia web site, with increased webcasting capacity. In the field of content creation, the focus is on the development of products and services in the languages, formats and packages that ensure their most effective distribution to, and use by, disseminators and end-users.

28. The effectiveness of that approach is illustrated, in part, by the latest advances in the development of the United Nations News Centre on the web site, including the new United Nations News Service, which now delivers news throughout the day to over 10,000 subscribers in 130 countries who have signed on in the nine months since the News Service was launched. The Arabic version of the News Centre was launched in January 2003 and work is under way to create similar dynamic database-driven sites in the remaining three official languages. That has become possible thanks to increased cooperation between the Internet Service and the Meetings Coverage and United Nations Radio Sections — a collaboration that makes efficient use of the language and news and information generating capacities of the Division. The position of Deputy Director has been created to assist in ensuring the management of the implementation of such cross-cutting initiatives.

29. Developments in the production and dissemination of the Division's products are complemented by continually expanding partnerships with broadcasters and other promotional activities. The effectiveness of those efforts is demonstrated on a daily basis through the live images of meetings at Headquarters — and such video products as the United Nations in Action — broadcast on major stations throughout the world; the expanding partnerships for United Nations Radio's live programmes on all continents; the increasing accesses to the United Nations News Centre; and wider viewing of the live webcasts.

C. Outreach Division

30. Through the Outreach Division, which combines much of the former Library and Information Resources Division with the functions previously carried out by the Public Liaison Service of the Public Affairs Division, the Department is placing new emphasis upon its relations with its partners and clients external to the Organization. Providing services to delegations as well as to the full range of civil society and the public at large, the Division focuses on information delivery, whether it is directly to the audience concerned or through key intermediaries, such as non-governmental organizations, the academic community, the media or an expanding network of depository libraries. The growing importance of civil society in the world today and its relation to the work of the Organization is recognized in the creation of a Civil Society Service. The Service brings together under one umbrella the new Educational Outreach Section, The UN Works programme, partnerships with the private sector, ongoing programmes such as those for non-governmental organizations, as well as special programmes and observances, exhibits, guided tours, the work of the United Nations speakers' bureau and other services to the public. In addition, the Organization's graphic design requirements, so essential to

the visual communication of the United Nations story, will be met to the greatest extent possible within the Division.

31. The Organization has already begun to reap the benefits of the new Division with greater synergy among the respective operations and new opportunities to expand the audience for its programmes and services. The Educational Outreach Section is strengthening relationships with the academic community in a variety of ways, among them, working closely with the Group Programmes Unit, through its briefings and videoconferences, as well as with the NGO Section, which counts university and other academic groups among those organizations associated with the Department. Within the Educational Outreach Section, its flagship publication, the *UN Chronicle*, presents articles authored by prominent scholars and politicians that serve to inform and stimulate debate on issues of global concern. In addition to the print version, the *Chronicle* will continue to be available to a larger global audience through its online edition and the worldwide republication of articles provided by its Feature Service. Similarly capitalizing on the reach and immediacy afforded by electronic media, The UN Works programme maintains a very visible presence on the United Nations web site and is collaborating with media and entertainment entities to convey the Organization's message in ways that are accessible and appealing to the public at large.

32. Working with partners has always been a key ingredient in the programmes undertaken by the Civil Society Service. That aspect remains as important as ever as the Department seeks to develop new partnerships, in particular with the private sector, and to use such support to help maximize the impact of its own information activities.

33. One long-standing programme that has benefited from that kind of support, especially in the face of rising costs and shrinking resources, is the Department's Training Programme for Broadcasters and Journalists from Developing Countries, in which more than 300 journalists from 140 countries have participated. In the past, the Department has sponsored 16 junior and mid-level media professionals for the six-week programme, which provides its participants with in-depth knowledge of the work of the United Nations system. The Friedrich Ebert Foundation has sponsored an additional four, for a total of 20 — the maximum, as experience has shown, for the group to remain manageable and productive. In recent years, however, the Department has been able to sponsor only 12 journalists per year from the resources available for the programme. Should additional resources become available for that activity, the Department will once again host an optimum number of journalists for the programme. (Individual Member States may also wish to consider sponsoring journalists from developing countries to take part in the programme.)

34. The Department will also actively pursue widening the reach of its publications through an energized and constantly updated web site, as well as by placing their contents as syndicated features in publications around the world, with the assistance of the United Nations information centres. The sales and marketing of publications, an income-generating activity, will be located in the Outreach Division. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library, as a key part of the Division, is emphasizing its service to delegations, Secretariat staff, scholars, depository libraries and the general public. It will play an increasing role in enhancing the knowledge management capacity of the Organization.

35. Last year's in-depth review of all United Nations libraries highlighted two major areas in need of attention: lack of integrated management and a need for further modernization. Recognizing that, the Secretary-General, in his reform report, called for specific measures to improve the provision of library services. As a first step in the implementation of those proposals, a Steering Committee for the Modernization and Integrated Management of United Nations Libraries, to be chaired by the Department of Public Information, was established. The Committee, in which are represented the libraries in the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna, the United Nations Environment Programme, the regional economic commissions and the United Nations University as well as the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, will design, develop and implement strategies to achieve a more modern, efficient and accessible system of library services in the United Nations. A separate report on the integrated management of United Nations libraries (A/AC.198/2003/5) is being submitted to the Committee on Information.

36. The Secretary-General's report on reform has called for improved oversight of publications in the belief that the key challenge is to get the right publication to the right reader at the right time. The Executive Committees will now be called upon to plan and coordinate all publications within their respective thematic areas in order to reduce their number and improve the coherence, focus and scheduling among the Organization's many publications. The Department of Public Information has, in turn, made proposals for reconstituting the Publications Board, which is organizationally located within the Outreach Division, as a standard-setting body, with appropriate membership and terms of reference.

37. The functions formerly performed by the Production and Coordination Unit have been eliminated or, as necessary, handled elsewhere. The Secretary-General is also proposing the transfer of the functions and resources of the Cartographic Section from the Department of Public Information to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, since the Section's outputs are more closely aligned to the needs and activities of that Department. That change will be reflected in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005.

IV. Activities of higher priority

A. United Nations information centres

38. The United Nations information centres, the United Nations information services and the information components of the United Nations field offices serve as branch offices of the Department. As such, they are integral to the implementation of the Department's strategies and the work of its divisions in reaching key constituencies at the local level. The recent report of the Secretary-General on strengthening of the United Nations laid out a proposal for restructuring the network of information centres, recognizing that the Organization must do a better job at strengthening its communications beyond Headquarters. The report proposed the idea of rationalizing the network of information centres around regional hubs, starting with the creation of a Western European hub.

39. The Department is preparing to implement the Secretary-General's proposal, starting with a regional hub to serve member countries of the European Union. The new operating concept will also aim to achieve a more equitable distribution of resources to information centres in all regions and the redeployment of resources to other high priority activities. They include priorities such as advances in multilingualism on the United Nations web site and the systematic evaluation of the impact of major product and service lines, in accordance with results-based management — activities which have been strongly supported by Member States, but for which additional resources are not available.

40. United Nations information centres have a vital role to play in communicating United Nations messages, countering misperceptions and functioning as points of access to United Nations material and data. The three principal reasons for moving towards regional hubs, therefore, are:

- To take advantage of a vastly altered world media landscape — including revolutionary advances in the technologies available to disseminate and communicate information
- To establish a smaller number of strategically located centres with a critical mass of staff and resources to allow for greater total impact than the existing network of smaller, poorly resourced centres
- To redistribute scarce resources away from centres in developed countries, which currently account for approximately 35 per cent of all expenditures for the centres, to information activities of higher priority.

41. In its resolution 57/300, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a progress report on the implementation of the proposal, with the objective of applying the initiative to other regions, where it will strengthen the flow and exchange of information in developing countries. More detailed guidelines and criteria for the regionalization of the United Nations information centres are contained in annex I to the present report, as requested in paragraph 44 of resolution 57/130 B. The Secretary-General proposes that those criteria be used to guide the application of the hub approach in other regions over the next three years, in consultation with concerned Member States.

42. Regarding the creation of the Western European hub, the Department is currently developing plans involving the closure of the nine existing centres located in the States members of the European Union and the creation of a regional hub. The proposal does not include the information services in Geneva and Vienna, as they perform essential functions for the large United Nations presences in those cities. As recommended by the General Assembly, the Department is assuming that the hub would be provided with rent-free premises by the host Government. One State member of the European Union has already offered premises in its capital.

43. The new operating model would release staff and financial resources that could be redeployed to:

- Centres in developing countries, particularly in the Middle East and Africa, thereby enabling them to deliver more effective and targeted programmes at a crucial time
- Strengthening the United Nations web site (particularly to enhance multilingualism, as has been previously requested by the General Assembly)

- Establishing a more robust system of evaluation and impact assessment for each of the many service and product lines of the Department of Public Information.

44. As requested by the General Assembly in paragraph 38 of its resolution 57/130 B, the results of the OIOS review of the structure and operations of United Nations information centres are provided in A/57/747, which is being submitted separately to the Committee on Information. The findings and recommendations of that review were fully taken into account in carrying out the comprehensive review of the Department of Public Information.

45. In the context of overall human resources reform, the Department also plans to create a mechanism to promote the rotation of staff to and from the field. In a related initiative, limits will be placed on the number of years the director of a centre can serve in any one location.

46. During the period under review, the Department has continued to support the consolidation of the United Nations field presence in a single United Nations house. Taking into account location, costs, and space requirements, wherever feasible, the information centre is located in a United Nations house. As of 1 October 2002, 24 information centres shared premises with other United Nations agencies in United Nations houses.

B. United Nations web site

47. The United Nations web site reached yet another milestone on 5 February 2003, by recording more than 10 million accesses during a 24-hour period. In contrast, the site had received 11.5 million accesses during the entire year in 1996. (The corresponding figure for 2002 is 1,695 million, or 1.7 billion accesses.) The web site has become a very cost-effective medium to disseminate information about the activities of the United Nations to far corners of the world at a continually decreasing cost per unit. With the improvement in connectivity, increasing numbers of users from developing countries are gaining access to that important resource.

48. In keeping with the expressed wishes of Member States, the Department has continued its efforts to enhance parity among the official languages on the United Nations web site. At the request of the Fifth Committee, the Secretary-General, in paragraph 8 of his report contained in document A/57/355, presented proposals for strengthening the Department of Public Information to support and enhance the United Nations web site in all official languages of the Organization, indicating that the current resource capacity of the Department in regard to language capability for the web site is barely at the maintenance level and is not adequate to sustain the rapid expansion in the use of the web site or to keep pace with the daily addition of new material occurring in all the official languages. The Secretary-General recommended that additional resources in the total amount of $1,297,500 would need to be identified.

49. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, in its report of 10 October 2002 (A/57/7/Add.2), recommended that the Secretary-General proceed to implement his proposal on the web site and report on the budgetary requirements, if any, in the context of the second performance report for the biennium 2002-2003. Subsequently, the General Assembly, in its decision 57/579 of

20 December 2002, requested the Secretary-General to proceed with the implementation of his proposal on strengthening the web site through the redeployment of resources within the Department of Public Information, giving priority to the language posts required, and to report on the status of implementation to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session.

50. The Department is implementing innovative approaches towards achieving the goal of multilingualism within its existing resources. The first priority, if the current level of activity is to be maintained, is to institutionalize the language capacity of the Website Section on a sound, sustainable and regular basis, through the allocation of regular posts for the language assistants who are currently on general temporary assistance. General Service posts are therefore being redeployed to the Department's Website Section to redress that situation and have been reflected in the budget proposals for the biennium 2004-2005.

51. The possibility that resources freed by the creation of a regional information hub in Western Europe could be redirected to certain United Nations information centres to increase language parity is also under consideration. To that end, the Department intends to undertake a pilot exercise in one duty station, once resources are available, to test the viability of that concept. If successful, it will be expanded to other duty stations. However, it must be stressed that only functions of a routine nature can be decentralized. A number of functions, including design, programming and editorial control, will remain a Headquarters function.

52. Another key component of the Department's plan to strengthen language parity on the United Nations home page is the expansion of the United Nations News Centre into all official languages. That is an excellent opportunity, since the News Centre is one of the most popular United Nations sites and serves as a gateway to other information sources system-wide. With the use of some limited resources released from the consolidation of the United Nations information centres, resources will be redeployed to ensure the daily functioning of the News Centre and to provide additional capacity for the other portions of the web site in the various languages. The synergies increasingly permitted by new technologies are being realized through increased coordination between news producing units and the Website Section, facilitated by the creation of the Internet Service, to achieve that objective within existing sources. However, it should be stressed that, given the intense demands of today's 24-hour news cycle, such an approach is highly vulnerable to disruption.

53. The Department is increasingly using the academic community worldwide to expand its language capacity. It has concluded an agreement with the University of Salamanca in Spain by which its School of Languages has provided over 1,200 pages of material translated into Spanish, at no cost to the Organization. A similar agreement is pending with a university in Egypt and the Department is aggressively pursuing that strategy with other universities for similar translation arrangements into the other languages. While that action is increasing the available material in the official languages, the need for editorial control, programming and processing places an additional workload on the existing staff resources.

54. Achieving greater parity on the United Nations web site cannot be the responsibility of the Department of Public Information alone, since other departments bear primary responsibility for the contents of pages relating to their work. The Department of Public Information is therefore working in close coordination with other departments throughout the Secretariat, encouraging and

assisting them to increase the availability of their materials in all official languages. A number of departments have indicated increased provisions in their budget for the biennium 2004-2005 to help meet that goal.

55. In the next few months, with the assistance of pro bono services, a thorough analysis of the web site will be carried out. The study, to be conducted across departments in the Secretariat, will formulate realistic proposals for redesigning, restructuring and refocusing the web site, including in relation to multilingualism, together with the necessary hardware and connectivity requirements, and the time frame for implementation, as well as for delineating the comprehensive additional resource investments essential for the achievement of that objective across the entire web site operation.

56. The realignment of priorities will serve two purposes: (a) to increase synergies and boost the team approach; and (b) to position Internet capacity to take advantage of evolving technology. The ultimate objective is to take the web site into the next phase, where a technologically sound, continually updated, intuitive and user-friendly site is available to users in their choice of language.

C. Performance management

57. The Department is currently in the process of formulating methodologies and plans to conduct a "systematic evaluation of the impact, efficiency and cost-effectiveness" of the Department's activities over a three-year period (resolution 57/300, para. 17), with assistance from the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

58. The Department of Public Information has also introduced an annual programme impact review, in response to the Secretary-General's appeal to ensure the alignment of the Organization's activities with its priorities. That annual process makes self-evaluation a part of the daily work of all programme managers in the Department with a view to institutionalizing performance management. To that end, the Department has agreed to be one of the pilots of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, as it looks to update and promote the monitoring and self-evaluation within a results-based framework.

59. The Department of Public Information will need to find the resources to promote evaluation as a managerial tool, to make it an integral part of production and planning, without jeopardizing programme delivery. For that purpose, the Department will seek to reallocate some of the resources released by the consolidation of United Nations information centres to ensure that the systematic evaluation of its activities is adequately funded.

V. Conclusions

60. As indicated in the Secretary-General's report on reform, the aspects of the comprehensive review which were within the authority of the Secretary-General have now been implemented. Those steps were taken on the basis of existing General Assembly resolutions and were inspired by the discussions in the Committee on Information. The Department of Public Information has worked with a renewed sense of mission under its reformed structure since 1 November 2002.

61. As the reform of the Department of Public Information enters its next phase, a number of the proposals will be considered in the context of the General Assembly's consideration of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005.

62. It is the view of the Secretary-General that the transformation of the Department of Public Information, as outlined in the present report, is the best way to ensure that the United Nations has the most effective communications mechanisms in place to meet the challenges of tomorrow. At this crucial time in the Organization's history, it is clear that the United Nations cannot succeed in fulfilling its goals without being able to communicate its work effectively to the world's peoples, in whose name the Charter was adopted. Meeting that challenge will be the principal responsibility of the new Department of Public Information.

Annex I

Guidelines and criteria for the regionalization of United Nations information centres

- The human and financial resources allocated to a regional hub must be significantly more than the best-equipped United Nations information centre under current circumstances. It should have the capacity to produce and disseminate information materials and the professional capability to maintain productive contacts with media in the region, as well as academic institutions and non-governmental organizations
- In a region with a common language, the hub shall be a centre for producing or adapting materials in that language, for use both in the region covered by the hub as well as in other parts of the world. Where there is more than one language, the hub should have the resources to undertake needed translations
- A regional hub should have the necessary facilities to serve as a fully resourced reference centre for United Nations information
- The host country would ideally have well-developed transportation and aerial links with the rest of the region, a relatively well-developed media landscape and modern communications systems, including connectivity, and active civil society institutions
- The existence of other United Nations offices, and regional organizations, may also be a factor in deciding on the optimum location of a hub
- Regional political considerations will also be taken into account
- The cost of a regional hub, including the provision of rent-free premises, would be an important factor
- To extend its reach, the regional information hub will collaborate closely with the country offices of United Nations Resident Coordinators, where they exist, and can engage in partnerships with national institutions and organizations including United Nations Associations
- Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 57/300, the Department of Public Information will consult with concerned Member States on the rationalization of the network of United Nations information centres around regional hubs.

Annex II

Official Document System

1. As stated by the Secretary-General in his report on re-engineering of the optical disk system (A/56/120/Rev.1) in 2000, the Information Technology Services Division initiated the re-engineering of the optical disk system in two phases in order to upgrade the existing proprietary system to a new open system. On 4 September 2001, phase 1 was completed and the newly re-engineered "Official Document System" (ODS) commenced its production operations, bringing significant improvements in performance, maintainability, reliability and scalability. On 4 February 2002, phase 2 was completed and the new multilingual ODS started its production operations, fully utilizing the advantage of the Lotus Notes multilingual capability, allowing users to select any of the six official languages.

2. The re-engineered ODS has made it possible to link directly to documents on ODS from the United Nations web site, as proposed by the Secretary-General in his report on the simultaneous availability of parliamentary documentation in electronic form in the six official languages of the United Nations (A/C.5/56/12). The direct access function, available in the six official languages, began on 5 June 2002 and has been incorporated into other specialized web sites of the United Nations (e.g., UNBISnet and the web sites of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean), making it easy to link all language versions of documents from the United Nations web sites, thereby facilitating the equal treatment of all official languages on those sites. The new Web publishing technical guideline, which is being finalized by the Working Group on Internet Matters, mandates that direct access function as the means of placing the official documents on the United Nations web sites.

3. Currently, ODS is a subscription-based service. While Member States and United Nations staff members can use ODS free of charge, other users must subscribe to the ODS service for a fee. By thus limiting the number of ODS users, the current ODS system infrastructure can handle the access load quite reliably. Such limits do not, however, permit the use of ODS as a general public information tool.

4. Therefore, free ODS access is desired, making ODS material available to general users and permitting anyone in the world to access ODS free of charge through the Internet, while retaining user identifications for those who need to access documents not available to the public. As a result, the number of potential ODS users will increase drastically. The current ODS system infrastructure will not be able to handle such an increased load from free ODS access. Thus, the current ODS system infrastructure will have to be upgraded.

5. The Information Technology Services Division has requested $1,530,000 for the implementation of free ODS access in the budget for the biennium 2004-2005. That includes the costs of upgrading the ODS system infrastructure for better performance, reliability and disaster-readiness with a number of new high-end servers and new or additional equipment for storage and disaster-readiness. It is envisioned that in the fourth quarter of 2004, the implementation of free ODS access will be completed, provided that the General Assembly approves the proposed resources.

United Nations portal

6. At its third session (New York, 4-5 March 2002), the High-Level Committee on Management asked for a feasibility and cost/benefit analysis of developing an inter-agency search facility, across the public web sites of all United Nations system organizations. In the light of the Secretariat's negotiations with Google, United Nations system information and communications technology managers meeting in Geneva in May 2002 recommended that the Secretariat take the lead in investigating solutions (and the financing of those solutions) for a system-wide search engine.

7. On the basis of comparative analyses of the technological capabilities and pricing schemes offered by a number of providers, the Secretariat, as task manager, recommended to the High-Level Committee that Google most closely met the requirements for a United Nations system search engine. It further proposed that the United Nations system search engine be piloted through the Google search appliance being procured for the United Nations web sites. The Secretariat also determined that an appropriate cost-sharing arrangement would need to be determined, based on the capacity requirements of participating organizations, taking into account the central administration costs of the Secretariat.

8. At its fourth meeting (Geneva, 7-8 October 2002), the High-Level Committee endorsed the concept of a search engine for the United Nations system as a whole and noted that, based upon full technical analysis, the United Nations considered that Google fulfilled the search engine requirements for the United Nations system. The High-Level Committee also requested that detailed proposals of the costs and time frame for implementation of a system-wide search capability be presented to the Committee at a future session, taking into account the Secretariat's experience with the Google system.

9. The Google contract with the United Nations was signed at the end of December 2002 and the search engine is expected to be available on the United Nations web sites by the second quarter of 2003. Once installed and running, an estimation will be made of the capacity that can be devoted to searching the web sites of other parts of the United Nations system. The United Nations Secretariat, along with the secretariat of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, will be contacting those organizations which expressed interest in participating in the United Nations system search pilot so as to proceed as soon as possible and report to the High-Level Committee thereon at the latest at its next session in the latter part of 2003.

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Programmatic aspects of the proposed programme budget for 2004-2005 for the Department of Public Information

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report sets out the programmatic aspects of the proposed programme budget for 2004-2005 for the Department of Public Information. It provides an overview and covers executive direction and management, as well as the four subprogrammes: strategic communications services, news services, library services and outreach services.

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1. The proposed programme of work in the field of public information for the biennium 2004-2005, which is contained in the annex, is being brought to the attention of the Committee on Information. In section I, paragraph 7, of its resolution 52/220, the General Assembly stressed the role of the relevant intergovernmental bodies in the consideration of the narrative of the proposed programme budget, as well as the necessity for a timely presentation of their recommendations on the budget. The present report is prepared in response to that resolution.

2. The Committee is invited to make comments, which will be transmitted to the Committee for Programme and Coordination, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session for review during the consideration of the Secretary-General's proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005.

Annex

Programmatic aspects of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005

Part VII
Public information

Section 28
Public information

Overview

28.1 The Department of Public Information is responsible for implementing the programme of activities under this section. These activities are carried out at Headquarters in New York and through the worldwide network of United Nations information centres and services. The programme is guided by the General Assembly and its subsidiary organ, the Committee on Information.

28.2 Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 56/253, a comprehensive review of the Department of Public Information was undertaken in 2002. The initial results of the review were submitted to the Committee on Information (see A/AC.198/2002/2). Subsequently, a final report on the review was submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session as part of the Secretary-General's report entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387 and Corr.1). Guided by the reform efforts of the Secretary-General, the comprehensive review served to align the Department's core competencies with the long list of mandates it carries out.

28.3 The overarching mandate of the Department, which dates back to General Assembly resolution 13 (I) of 13 February 1946, is to increase awareness and understanding of the work and purposes of the United Nations among peoples of the world. However, the comprehensive review found that the Department as a whole suffered from a fragmentation of its efforts as a result of its having too many mandates and missions. To help clarify the goals and purposes of the Department, and to enhance its overall effectiveness and efficiency, a new mission statement has been formulated, as follows:

> "The Department of Public Information's mission is to help fulfil the substantive purposes of the United Nations by strategically communicating the activities and concerns of the Organization to achieve the greatest public impact."

28.4 In adhering to its renewed mission, the Department will be guided by the priorities laid down by the General Assembly. Its core message, with the Millennium Declaration as its main guide, will focus on the eradication of poverty, conflict prevention, sustainable development, human rights, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the battle against international terrorism and the needs of the African continent (see resolution 57/130 B).

28.5 A new operating model has been created for the Department to realize its mission. It is based on a clear conception of the Department's role and an elaboration of its functions in a manner that emphasizes current communication challenges, while also providing the expected services to Member States. This model further recognizes that content generation emanates from the other departments and offices of the Secretariat and organizations of the United Nations system, while content coordination and refinement, as well as content presentation and distribution, are the

responsibility of the Department, working in close cooperation with the media, Member States and civil society partners.

28.6 The operating model aims to improve the Department's ability to deliver effective and targeted information programmes. As a result, a new organizational structure has been put into effect, as described below.

28.7 The Strategic Communications Division has been established to devise and disseminate United Nations messages centred on priority themes with the aim of broadening understanding of and support for the work of the United Nations. To this end, it has been enhanced by the inclusion of the network of United Nations information centres and services, as well as the Africa Section.

28.8 The central objective of the News and Media Division is the delivery of timely, accurate, objective and balanced news and information to the media and other audiences worldwide; it has been strengthened through the creation of the Internet Service, which covers United Nations web-site activities and news services.

28.9 The Outreach Division will provide information to stimulate opinion and debate through outreach efforts targeted directly to the public and in alliance with key partners, including non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and other representatives of civil society. Emphasis will be placed on educational outreach and strengthening relationships with the academic community. Through the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, the Division provides library products and services for use by Permanent Missions of Member States, the Secretariat, researchers and depository libraries worldwide.

28.10 The transformation of the Department of Public Information, as envisaged in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change", would ensure that the United Nations has an effective communication mechanism in place to tell its story and thus gain the public support that is essential for strengthening the Organization. The General Assembly, in its resolution 57/300 of 20 December 2002, reaffirmed the role of the Committee on Information in guiding the process of restructuring the Department, and invited the Committee to engage actively in this process. The guidance of the Committee on Information is being sought during its twenty-fifth session with regard to the new subprogramme structure and the related programme of work outlined in the proposed programme budget, and the concurrence of the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its forty-third session will also be sought for appropriate recommendation to the General Assembly.

28.11 The United Nations information centres, the United Nations information services and the information components of the United Nations field offices serve as branch offices of the Department. As such, they are integral to the implementation of the Department's strategies and the work of its divisions in reaching key constituencies at the local level. The Department is developing an action plan to implement the proposal of the Secretary-General, of which the General Assembly took note at its fifty-seventh session (see resolution 57/300), to rationalize the network of United Nations information centres around regional hubs, starting with the creation of a regional hub in Western Europe. This new operating concept will also be aimed at achieving a better distribution of resources to information centres in developing countries and the redeployment of resources to other high-priority activities, such as advancing multilingualism on the United Nations web site and the systematic evaluation of the impact of major product and service lines, in accordance with results-based management — activities that have been strongly supported by Member States but for which resources are not available.

28.12 The Department will enhance its capacity to respond to unpredictable and fast-moving events around the world by providing information services to the media, Member States, non-governmental organizations and the public on United Nations actions in connection with these

critical situations. Its expertise will be strengthened through cooperation with relevant substantive Secretariat departments and offices and organizations of the United Nations system. It will continue to disseminate the United Nations message through traditional means of communication as well as using new technologies.

28.13 As part of the effort to focus on core competencies, the Cartographic Section is being transferred to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The Secretary-General proposed the transfer in his report "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change", since a significant portion of the Section's work consists of the production of cartographic products and geographical information services in response to the requirements of the Security Council during its deliberations on peacekeeping operations. The General Assembly, in its resolution 57/300, noted the proposal of the Secretary-General and decided to consider the matter in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005. Accordingly, the outward redeployment of six posts (one P-5, three P-3, one P-2 and one General Service) is proposed for the biennium 2004-2005.

28.14 The guided tours and briefing programmes in New York, Geneva and Vienna, providing services for a total of approximately 1.4 million visitors per biennium, are addressed in income section 3, Services to the public, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005, as are sales of United Nations publications.

Executive direction and management

28.15 The Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information is responsible for the overall direction and strategic management of United Nations communications and public information, both at Headquarters and in the field. The Under-Secretary-General establishes departmental policies and guidelines, deals with specific policy and management issues and problems, and is responsible for the administrative, financial and personnel management of the Department. The Under-Secretary-General is responsible for directing policy related to the committee liaison functions performed by the Department, with regard to both intergovernmental bodies (e.g., Committee on Information) and the system-wide United Nations Communications Group (UNCG). The Under-Secretary-General also serves as Coordinator for questions relating to multilingualism throughout the Secretariat.

28.16 The Under-Secretary-General assesses and reports on the programme performance of the Department through the Evaluation and Communications Research Unit. With greater emphasis being placed on performance management, the Unit is responsible for the implementation of an annual programme impact review, assisting programme managers in complying with results-based management and providing technical support to staff in assessing media coverage and target audience needs.

Table 28.1 **Objective for the biennium, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement**

Objective: To support the work of the Secretary-General and the substantive purposes of the United Nations by engaging in strategic communication on the activities and concerns of the Organization to achieve the greatest public impact.

Expected accomplishments	*Indicators of achievement*
(a) Satisfaction of Member States and United Nations system partners with the work of the Department	(a) Level of feedback from Member States and United Nations system partners, received through formal channels, indicating that the Department effectively communicates the activities and concerns of the Organization
(b) Improved external communications and media relations of the United Nations	(b) Increase in media awareness and in positive reporting in connection with the media work undertaken by the Under-Secretary-General
(c) A strengthened culture of communication and coordination within the Secretariat and among United Nations system partners	(c) Increased number of joint and/or coordinated activities with UNCG member organizations
(d) Enhanced impact through an effective management culture	(d) The number of programme managers who use the performance management process for designing programmes and adopting best practices

External factors

28.17 The Office of the Under-Secretary-General is expected to achieve its objectives and expected accomplishments on the assumption that:

(a) Intergovernmental bodies and United Nations system organizations continue to support the Department's work;

(b) Political and other developments do not adversely affect media coverage and the delivery of planned activities.

Subprogramme 1
Strategic communication services

28.18 Subprogramme 1 will be implemented by the Strategic Communications Division, which includes the Committee Liaison Unit, the Communications Campaigns Service, the Information Centres Service and the global network of United Nations information centres, United Nations information services and information components of United Nations offices.

28.19 The Strategic Communications Division has been established to devise and disseminate United Nations messages centred on main themes, particularly the priorities outlined by the General Assembly and established by the Secretary-General. The Division develops communications strategies, in close collaboration with the substantive departments, the United Nations funds and

programmes and the organizations of the United Nations system, to promote the work of the United Nations on priority issues, using the Millennium Declaration as its guide.

28.20 These messages will be strategically conveyed to the public around the world through proactive relations with the media and other key intermediaries. Under the guidance of the Information Centres Service at Headquarters, the United Nations information centres, United Nations information services and information components of United Nations offices will work through local intermediaries to adapt this substantive content to their audiences, giving a local voice to global United Nations messages. Information components of peace missions will also carry these messages.

28.21 With a view to enhancing the capacity of the Organization to better inform peoples in all parts of the world about the United Nations, existing resources will be redirected to regional information hubs in strategic locations. In that context, plans are being developed to consolidate public information outreach to the member States of the European Union through the closure of the nine centres located in those States and the creation of a Western European information hub. This proposal does not include the United Nations Information Services at Geneva and Vienna, as they perform functions essential to the work of United Nations offices in those cities.

28.22 The United Nations Information Service at Geneva provides strategic communications and public information support to the Office of the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Conference on Disarmament, the Economic Commission for Europe and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. The United Nations Information Service at Vienna provides strategic communications and public information support to the Office of the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the International Narcotics Control Board, the Office for Outer Space Affairs and the International Trade Law Branch.

28.23 The new operating concept for the information centres, with the consolidation of the information centres in Western Europe, would release staff and financial resources for redeployment to activities of higher priority, including those of information centres in developing countries, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 57/130 B. In particular, the centres in Africa and the Middle East would see an increase in resources, enabling them to deliver more effective and targeted programmes at a crucial time.

28.24 In its resolution 57/7, the General Assembly called for the United Nations to strengthen its advocacy role and public information activities in support of Africa's development. The Africa Section will promote awareness, among opinion leaders in Africa and in the international community, of the nature of the critical economic and social situation in Africa and of the domestic and international efforts required for recovery and development. It will produce a range of information materials and activities, including the publication of *Africa Recovery*, the resources for which are reflected in section 11 of the proposed programme budget for 2004-2005, and will ensure dissemination to a diverse public, as well as to target groups such as parliamentarians, policy makers and civil society.

Table 28.2 **Objective for the biennium, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement**

Objective: To broaden understanding of and support for the work of the United Nations on priority issues through strategic communications.

Expected accomplishments	*Indicators of achievement*
(a) Successful collaboration with client departments to develop communications strategies on priority issues	(a) Percentage of clients that indicate satisfactory collaboration
(b) Increased awareness of key thematic issues among target audiences through the implementation of communications strategies on those issues	(b) Percentage of target audiences indicating increased awareness
(c) Increased utility of materials on priority issues that meet the needs of targeted media	(c) Percentage of media outlets that indicate satisfaction with materials produced in support of communications strategies

External factors

28.25 The subprogramme is expected to achieve its objectives and expected accomplishments on the assumption that:

(a) Client departments provide required substantive input;

(b) Institutions of civil society, redisseminators and other partners are able to participate in collaborative efforts of the United Nations, including at the local level;

(c) Political and other developments do not adversely affect the delivery of planned activities.

Subprogramme 2
News services

28.26 Subprogramme 2 will be implemented by the News and Media Division (which includes the Internet Service, the Press Service and the Radio and Television Service) and the Office of the Spokesman for the Secretary-General.

28.27 The objective of the subprogramme is to increase the interest of news organizations and media in, and their access to, up-to-date news and other information about the Organization and its activities. Done effectively, this will help build greater public support and awareness.

28.28 This objective will be accomplished through the real-time delivery of accurate, balanced and, whenever possible, customized news and information materials and services to media organizations in all regions, utilizing traditional media as well as new information technologies, including the Internet. Developing-country media will be a particular focus of this subprogramme.

28.29 The News and Media Division will continue to focus on maximizing the synergies made possible by the development of information technologies to realize the strategy outlined above, utilizing the daily output of the United Nations News Service, the United Nations web site, United Nations Radio and United Nations Television, including video, photos and press releases. Underpinning the news drive of the Division will be a major project, begun in the 2000-2001 biennium, to modernize

the Department's production and broadcast infrastructure, including further digitization. The creation of the Internet Service will contribute substantially to the strengthened and coordinated utilization of the Internet as a multimedia channel for both the production of such news materials and their dissemination to all regions quickly and in all official languages.

28.30 The Division will proactively reach out directly to journalists and media organizations and seek partnerships with broadcasters to ensure that the news media in all regions have access at all times to news about United Nations activities and to the perspectives of the Organization as it addresses the priority concerns identified by the Member States. By seeking feedback from such partners and other clients, the Division will ensure the continuing relevance of its various news products.

28.31 The resources freed up by creating a regional information hub in Western Europe will in part be redirected to strengthen the multilingual capacity of the United Nations web site.

Table 28.3 **Objective for the biennium, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement**

Objective: To increase the interest of news organizations and media in, and their access to, up-to-date news and other information about the Organization and its activities.

Expected accomplishments	*Indicators of achievement*
Satisfaction with the availability of timely, accurate, objective and balanced information and/or services to the media, delegations, other audiences and redisseminators on the role of the United Nations in addressing the priority issues before the Organization	The satisfaction of users with the availability of timely, accurate, objective and balanced information and/or services

External factors

28.32 The subprogramme is expected to achieve its objectives and expected accomplishments on the assumption that:

(a) National and international media organizations will participate in partnerships and co-productions;

(b) Political, economic and other factors will enable media organizations to access and redisseminate United Nations information material.

Subprogramme 3
Library services

28.33 Subprogramme 3 will be implemented by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, Outreach Division.

28.34 The subprogramme aims to create and/or provide timely and up-to-date information products and services to meet the needs of delegates, secretariat staff and researchers; to facilitate access to United Nations information for depository libraries and the general public worldwide; to contribute to bridging the digital divide; to mobilize the international library community, in particular depository libraries, as conduits of outreach to civil society; and to oversee and coordinate the activities of the United Nations libraries.

28.35 The Dag Hammarskjöld Library, in coordination with other United Nations libraries as well as libraries of the wider United Nations system, will continue to move in the direction of becoming a

virtual library, while not neglecting the print collections of United Nations documents, books, serials and government documents required by its users. There will be increasing emphasis on the creation and delivery of electronic information, outreach to depository libraries and support for multilingualism. The delivery of customized information directly to the desktops of Permanent Missions at Headquarters and Secretariat staff worldwide will be expanded. The Library's Internet and Intranet sites will be enriched and further developed in all six official languages, with multilingual retrieval capabilities. Access to commercially available electronic information will be made available in a cost-effective way through the United Nations System Consortium. Access for depository libraries to United Nations databases will be promoted where feasible to ensure rapid, complete and cost-effective document distribution. Through active participation in inter-agency library forums, the Library will promote the sharing of information throughout the United Nations system.

28.36 In-house creation and processing of data, including databases and other electronic products, published indexes, standards and guidelines for bibliographic control and multilingual reference tools will be expanded and improved. The UNBIS Thesaurus will be regularly maintained as a six-language database. Two comprehensive, accurate and high-quality annual editions of the *Yearbook of the United Nations* will be published, covering the years 2002 and 2003, and will constitute input for parallel CD-ROM versions of the *Yearbook*.

28.37 A major focus will be on training, including courses for Headquarters users and depository librarians overseas, as well as electronic delivery of advice, manuals and database structures to small United Nations libraries in the field.

Table 28.4 **Objective for the biennium, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement**

Objective: To facilitate access to timely and up-to-date library products and services for use by delegates, Permanent Missions of Member States, the Secretariat, researchers and depository libraries worldwide.

Expected accomplishments	*Indicators of achievement*
(a) Easier, more extensive and timelier access by users to products and services of the Library	(a) User satisfaction with quality and timeliness and ease of access to the products and services of the Library
(b) Timely issuance of the *Yearbook of the United Nations*	(b) Reduced time lag between the end of the year covered and the publication date of the relevant volume

External factors

28.38 The subprogramme will be expected to achieve its objectives and expected accomplishments on the assumption that:

(a) The interest of target audiences in electronic information will continue to grow;

(b) United Nations system agencies will continue to cooperate and collaborate, particularly in availing themselves of online services through the Consortium;

(c) Prices for online services will remain stable or become more favourable;

(d) Official documentation will be available on time;

(e) Delays related to bidding and printing processes will be minimal.

Subprogramme 4
Outreach services

28.39 Subprogramme 4 will be implemented by the Outreach Division, which includes the Civil Society Service, the Sales and Marketing Section and the secretariat of the Publications Board. The Division also includes the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, which is covered in subprogramme 3, Library services.

28.40 The objective of subprogramme 4 is to promote awareness of the role and work of the United Nations on priority issues, using the Millennium Declaration as a guide, and to inform and influence the public through outreach efforts targeted at key intermediaries, such as non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and other representatives of civil society, as well as directly to the general public.

28.41 In this connection, the Outreach Division will work to develop, strengthen and expand its relationships with partners both within the United Nations system and among non-governmental organizations, the academic community and the private sector. The Outreach Division will also seek opportunities to promote more effectively its programmes and services designed for those audiences, as well as for the general public, capitalizing on the opportunities provided by new information and communication technologies, including the Internet and video-conferencing.

Table 28.5 **Objective for the biennium, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement**

Objective: To inform and stimulate opinion and debate through outreach efforts targeted directly to the public and in alliance with key partners, including non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, other representatives of civil society and the media, using the Millennium Declaration as a guide.

Expected accomplishments	*Indicators of achievement*
Enhanced understanding of the role, work and concerns of the United Nations resulting from outreach activities, programmes and services	Percentage of target audiences indicating satisfaction that their understanding of the United Nations has grown or improved

External factors

28.42 The subprogramme is expected to achieve its objectives and expected accomplishments on the assumption that:

(a) Institutions of civil society, redisseminators and other partners, including other offices of the United Nations system, are able to collaborate with the Department;

(b) Academic interest in the principles, activities and concerns of the United Nations does not diminish;

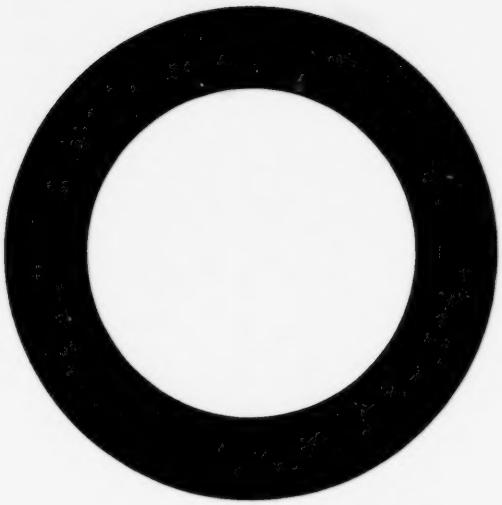
(c) Global access to Internet services and video-conferencing is not inhibited by financial or technological constraints;

(d) Political and other developments do not adversely affect collaborative partnerships or programme attendance;

(e) Security concerns do not have a negative impact or result in restricted access to United Nations Headquarters.

Programme support

28.43 The Executive Office provides the administrative, managerial and programme support necessary for the implementation of the mandated activities of the Department of Public Information. It assists the Under-Secretary-General in the preparation of the medium-term plan, the preparation, administration and monitoring of the programme budget and the management of trust funds and extrabudgetary resources; provides relevant support services for the efficient utilization of human resources; and plans, controls and coordinates requirements related to general office administration. It also handles the Department's information technology needs, including the maintenance and upgrading of computer equipment and user applications.



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Implementation of the pilot project on the development of an international radio broadcasting capacity for the United Nations

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

As a result of requests contained in General Assembly resolutions 56/64 B of 24 December 2001 and 57/130 B of 11 December 2002 regarding the implementation of the United Nations international radio broadcasting capacity, the Department of Public Information commissioned a survey on the estimated worldwide audience for United Nations Radio programmes in all six official languages, plus Portuguese. Representing a snapshot of listenership as at November 2002, and carried out with the active participation of 180 partner stations, the survey estimates conservatively that more than 133 million people listen to United Nations Radio at least once a week. The results of the survey are broken down in the report by language and region. The report emphasizes that building partnerships with local, regional and national broadcasters worldwide continues to be a priority factor for ensuring the continued expansion of United Nations Radio outreach. While the digital divide is a constraint on expanding and improving the dissemination of programmes in some regions, the report concludes that, due to its universal reach and cost-effectiveness, radio remains the most potent means of communication for the United Nations, particularly in developing countries.

03-27325 (E) 170303

I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 49 of its resolution 56/64 B of 24 December 2001, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General "to submit a report on the implementation of the United Nations international radio broadcasting capacity to the Committee on Information at its twenty-fifth session, including information that can be obtained from the local, national and regional radio partners about the estimated number of listeners reached, in order for the Committee to decide on the future of this capacity". The following year, in paragraph 55 of its resolution 57/130 B of 11 December 2002, the General Assembly reiterated this request, and asked in addition for information on "the cost-effectiveness of radio as an instrument in United Nations activities". The present report has been prepared in response to those requests.

II. Results of an in-depth survey

2. The Department of Public Information engaged an independent consultant to conduct a survey on the estimated worldwide audience for United Nations Radio programmes in all six official languages, plus Portuguese. This in-depth survey was carried out from September to November 2002 through partner stations worldwide, and it has revealed a number of encouraging trends:

- Utilizing a measure commonly used by broadcasters, the survey estimates conservatively that more than 133 million people listen to United Nations Radio at least once a week in one of the six official languages of the Organization or Portuguese.
- The actual weekly audience for United Nations Radio is in fact higher than the survey figure, which does not cover affiliate radio stations of partner broadcasters that pass on to them United Nations Radio material, nor stations transmitting by short wave or satellite (listenership figures could not be estimated for either of these categories).
- Such extensive outreach in all regions of the world, in seven languages and with a weekly audience of well over 133 million, is possible only because of the universality and cost-effectiveness of the medium of radio. The international broadcasting capacity that made this possible is achieved with the relatively small investment of the additional $2.4 million provided to the Department of Public Information by Member States per biennium.
- The survey was carried out with the active participation of 180 partner stations, with a remarkable 94 per cent providing the required information. Many of the participating partner stations are major national broadcasters, a clear indication of worldwide interest in United Nations Radio broadcasts.
- Responses from client stations indicate that the daily United Nations Radio feeds provide a valuable service, supplying material not available from other news sources. For example, many radio stations — including national broadcasters — find it difficult to cover some crucial international stories with the authority and scope the stories require. United Nations Radio provides range and depth of coverage, including regional focus and regional voices. As

the public voice of the United Nations, United Nations Radio speaks with unique authority on matters that are before the Organization.

- The survey represents a snapshot of listenership as at November 2002. Technological factors constitute a constraint on United Nations Radio's further fulfilment of its potential. This is particularly manifested in the continuing heavy dependence on transmitting programmes through the telephone, a system that both holds back United Nations Radio's ability to expand its services and limits the flexibility of stations receiving the material. Efforts being made by the international community to help bridge the digital divide, specifically by increasing broadcasters' access to satellite and Internet technology, will help to overcome such limitations.

III. Methodology of the survey

3. The principal source of information for the survey was direct and extensive telephone contact with partner stations that receive United Nations Radio programmes in the six official languages, as well as in Portuguese. Each station was asked to complete a detailed questionnaire. Figures obtained from these questionnaires were carefully checked against data on radio ownership, known listening patterns, published surveys in relevant territories and commercially conducted surveys (specifically those carried out by the British Broadcasting Corporation and by Intermedia, an independent radio research company) to develop an information matrix from which an estimate of likely audience levels for United Nations Radio materials could be derived. In a few cases, partner stations had conducted their own authoritative surveys, the results of which were used for this study.

4. United Nations Radio supplied a list of 180 broadcasting stations, 94 per cent of which provided the requested information in full. Given the normal rate of return for such questionnaires, with even 25 per cent considered acceptable, this is a clear reflection of the active and close working relationship between United Nations Radio and its partner stations, as well as the stations' continuing interest in receiving the programmes. Stations provided information on either their per day or per week listenership. The figures in the present report are therefore given on one or the other of these bases. The total figure is an amalgam of the daily and weekly figures, as the survey method ensured that there was no overlap between the two methods.

5. It is important to note that there are constraints on all public broadcasters in seeking to estimate audience figures, in view of the considerable costs associated with detailed market research, as a result of which even global broadcasting giants are limited in terms of the scope of a survey. The stations were split between the 129 that use the daily 15-minute transmission from United Nations Radio on a regular basis, either in its entirety or in part, and the 51 stations that used United Nations Radio material on a less regular basis. It is important to point out that only the former were used in determining the audience figures for United Nations Radio.

6. In the survey, a fundamental approach of caution was taken in estimating listenership, and the statistical practice of underestimating conservatively was used where estimates were necessary.

IV. Results of radio station-based survey: breakdown by language and region

7. The survey showed that United Nations Radio in the six official languages has 112 active partner radio stations that use our materials on a regular basis, either in their daily news programmes or in weekly magazine programmes. By language, the number of stations is as follows:

Arabic: 11

Chinese: 8

English: 24

French: 23

Russian: 6

Spanish: 40

In addition to the six official languages, United Nations Radio's daily five-minute news bulletins in Portuguese are broadcast on 17 partner stations.

8. The estimated audience figures for partner station broadcasts, by region, are as follows (not including listenership via short wave, satellite or other means of transmission):

Region	*Estimated audience*
North America	920 000
South America	36 855 400
Caribbean	1 521 000
Sub-Saharan Africa	26 299 750
Middle East and North Africa	3 596 000
Europe, including the Commonwealth of Independent States	41 806 000
Asia and the Pacific	22 265 000
Total	**133 263 150**

9. Below is a language-by-language breakdown of the main results of the survey. In addition, an indication is given of where there is a significant, though not specifically estimated, audience for short wave or satellite broadcasts. As noted above, in all regions there are also a number of stations that transmit United Nations Radio material on a less frequent basis, or for which it was not possible to gather survey data. No estimates for listenership for these stations are provided, though such audiences are hearing United Nations Radio material as well.

1. Arabic

10. Eleven stations in 11 countries and territories use United Nations Radio material, for which the likely total daily audience is conservatively estimated at some 3 million. This includes an estimated daily listenership of 502,000 on Radio Algeria and of 339,000 on Radio Tunisia, as well as a combined estimated

listenership of 300,000 per day on Radio Free Lebanon and Radio Abu Dhabi. In addition, United Nations Radio in Arabic is carried to North Africa and the Middle East via satellite by Merlin Communications and by ArabSat. ArabSat carries United Nations Radio as part of the package it delivers to major Middle East broadcasters, including Al-Jazeera. No audience estimates are available for these satellite-based broadcasts.

2. Chinese

11. Based on the survey results, a conservative estimate of the audience for the Chinese programme is that 20 million people a week hear United Nations Radio on China National Radio and 1.6 million listen weekly to East Radio-Shanghai. Apart from the weekly audiences, there is a daily audience of 600,000 listeners on Radio-Beijing alone. The Chinese programme is also heard by an estimated 165,000 people on specialist stations in Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America.

3. English

12. United Nations Radio's English language programmes are heard across several continents, but particularly in Africa. In Nigeria, nearly 11 million listeners are able to hear the United Nations programmes via the main State broadcaster, the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria. In Sierra Leone, 2 million people listen to United Nations Radio daily, both on the national broadcaster, Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service, and via the special and popular United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) station, Radio UNAMSIL, which has country-wide reach. In Zambia, United Nations Radio's daily programme is live on the evening news on the National Broadcasting Corporation's stations, with an estimated weekly audience of 1 million to 2 million.

13. Also in Africa, Channel Africa — the external service of the South African Broadcasting Corporation — carries United Nations Radio in three languages, including English. It has considerable reach across the continent through the use of its own partner stations, on short wave and via the Internet. Channel Africa's conservative audience figures indicate more than 750,000 listeners a week in English, which are not included in the survey results.

14. In the Caribbean, United Nations Radio's English programmes are broadcast on stations in the Bahamas, Guyana, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, and Grenada. The Guyana Broadcasting Corporation, for example, which uses United Nations Radio material at peak times, reaches an estimated 70,000 listeners daily with United Nations Radio programmes. In the United States, the Black Radio Network carries United Nations Radio programmes on its 168 client stations.

4. French

15. Twenty-three stations in 19 countries use United Nations Radio's French language programmes. Africa is the prime target for the French programmes, with more than 1 million weekly listeners just for the very popular Africa No. 1, which is based in the capital of Gabon, Libreville. In Mali 300,000 listeners a week are able to hear United Nations Radio via Radio Kledu. In North Africa, Radio Morocco uses United Nations Radio programmes at peak times, with an estimated daily audience of 980,000. In Chad, the national broadcaster, which reaches more than 5 million

people daily, uses United Nations Radio news items in its evening and late-night news programmes, with the United Nations Radio audience estimated at nearly 200,000 listeners. Channel Africa also broadcasts United Nations Radio's French programmes, with an estimated weekly audience of approximately 500,000. Again, this is in addition to the estimated listenership derived from the survey.

16. Radio Tropicale, based in New York, broadcasts United Nations Radio on its New York and Haitian stations and reaches more than 1.3 million people a week.

5. Russian

17. Forty million listeners a week hear the United Nations Radio Russian programmes on The Voice of Russia, which broadcasts them at peak times, to all countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Belarus National Radio-Channel 1, a relatively new partner, adds an estimated 1.4 million more listeners. United Nations Radio programmes are also heard by Russian-language listeners on stations in Estonia, Finland and even the city of Chicago in the United States.

6. Spanish

18. United Nations Radio in Spanish covers more than 40 stations in 18 countries in Central and Latin America. Among the larger partners is Radio Nacional Argentina, which has 2 million listeners a day for United Nations Radio programmes. In Guatemala, another 1 million people listen to United Nations Radio through Radio Sonora. Radio Nacional de Paraguay has up to 740,000 listeners daily. In Mexico, United Nations Radio items are broadcast via seven major networks that have their own affiliate stations across that country. These networks have an estimated listenership of almost 10 million per day.

7. Portuguese

19. United Nations Radio also produces a daily five-minute news bulletin in Portuguese. On average, these bulletins reach an estimated weekly audience of 27 million listeners in Europe, Latin America and Africa, with the bulk of the listenership in Brazil. In addition, Channel Africa carries United Nations Radio's Portuguese programmes, with an estimated weekly listenership of more than 750,000.

20. It should be noted that United Nations Radio's Portuguese bulletin is not officially part of the current Live Radio Project and that the short (five-minute) duration of its daily programme makes it a totally different product from that produced by the six official language units, all of which send 15 minutes of material to their clients every day.

V. Additional listenership

21. As already indicated, the actual listenership for United Nations Radio is estimated to be in excess of the 133 million derived from the survey results alone. It has not been possible to include audiences of affiliate stations of United Nations Radio partner broadcasters, for example. In countries such as Mexico, where partner stations have a number of affiliates receiving United Nations materials from them,

this audience can be significant. In addition to those stations reporting regular use of United Nations Radio material, some 51 other stations use United Nations material on a basis that ranges from semi-regularly to occasionally. There are a number of reasons why these stations do not use United Nations Radio programmes more regularly, including station-based issues, technical problems in receiving materials on a regular basis and editorial decisions on content. Such stations are receiving priority attention in the Department of Public Information's ongoing promotion and marketing work for United Nations Radio (see sect. VI below).

22. Satellite and short wave broadcasters, as already discussed above, are another example of successful outreach, which represents a significant daily and weekly audience in many parts of the world. The English and French programmes, for example, are broadcast daily by World Radio Network (WRN), a London-based company that has gathered together a large number of public radio networks that place their programmes on its satellites so that they can broadcast each other's material. Major member broadcasters include Deutsche Welle, Radio Netherlands, Radio Australia, RTE Ireland, Radio Polonia, Radio Canada International, RVI Flanders International and many more. United Nations Radio is carried by WRN's three satellites covering Europe, Asia and the Pacific, the Middle East, Africa and North and South America. WRN maintains a regular, advertised schedule and has weekly updates for all its partner stations and networks. However, it does not maintain audience figures for the stations that download its transmissions; this would require separate surveys.

23. In addition to WRN, Merlin Communications' satellites, available in Africa and the Middle East, carry United Nations Radio's English, French and Arabic broadcasts. They reach listeners by short wave. CCN en Español, a major international service, carries United Nations Radio Spanish programmes to 150 stations in Latin America and 100 in the United States. China Radio International and ArabSat also carry many United Nations Radio features, but again it is impossible to estimate the audience numbers without separate surveys being conducted.

24. United Nations Radio also reaches its audience via the Internet. For each of the six official languages and Portuguese, there are web pages that include the text of the news stories and summaries of the features of the day. Visitors to the web pages can listen to the programme; free downloads of audio software are available. The growing outreach of the Internet is shown, for example, by the frequent references to United Nations Radio's Russian programmes on web sites located in many countries of the CIS, including the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan.

25. Ideally, individual surveys should be carried out to determine the estimated audience figures for all the short wave, Internet and satellite-delivered systems. The costs, however, would be extremely high, and in fact are the principal deterrent preventing even many major commercial stations from undertaking such a project.

VI. Ensuring continued expansion of United Nations Radio outreach

26. Building partnerships with local, regional and national broadcasters worldwide continues to be a priority for the department vis-à-vis the development of an international radio broadcasting capacity for the United Nations. In February, three Spanish-language radio stations became our newest partners: Radio Indautxu in Spain and Radio America AM 1220 and Radio Stereo Sol FM 107.1, both in Nicaragua.

27. United Nations Radio is building a higher profile on the Internet through active cooperation with the United Nations News Centre, the third most visited page on the United Nations web site, supplying interviews and linking to the News Centre's page. In turn, the News Centre links to specific audio stories on the United Nations Radio pages, as appropriate. The expansion of the News Centre into more of the official languages will increase the synergy between it and United Nations Radio. Much of the material for the four new pages will be based on radio news stories in the respective languages. The News Centre in Arabic was inaugurated on 31 January 2003. This will soon be followed by Spanish, Russian and Chinese pages. As these new web pages establish themselves as regular parts of the News Centre, it is expected that the number of daily hits for the News Centre and radio pages will increase rapidly.

28. The need to expand United Nations Radio's client base will continue to be central to the efforts of the Department of Public Information to increase the interest of news organizations and the media and their access to up-to-date news and other information about the Organization and its activities, and thereby to reach many more people around the world. Specifically, renewed efforts will be directed towards Asia, where there is great potential. As part of its promotional efforts, the Department is exploring a number of possible initiatives, including coordinated telemarketing to cultivate new clients; an electronic newsletter with updated information on the Department's radio programming and its radio station partners; and more regular participation in relevant major international meetings and conferences of broadcasters to promote United Nations Radio programmes and the other products of the Department. An important element of this strategy is focusing on expanding the number of partners in developed countries.

29. The introduction of the new integrated and automated news-gathering and production capacity, with desktop audio editing, work on which gets under way this year, will also considerably strengthen the Department's capacity to provide broadcasters with material more rapidly and more flexibly. The planned modernization and upgrading of the United Nations International Broadcasting Centre with digital technology will also greatly facilitate the dissemination of the radio programmes to client stations.

30. The geographical and linguistic spread of the daily United Nations Radio programmes is comprehensive. The survey confirmed, however, that this reach would be greater were it not for the digital divide, as mentioned above, which severely hampers distribution in some regions. Many stations, particularly in Africa, continue to receive daily transmissions through the telephone, and they confirmed through the survey the unreliability and difficulties they often face by using this method. Receiving material via a file transfer protocol through the Internet

immensely improves the transmission of radio programmes, with a consequent increase in audio quality that will be appreciated by their listeners. In this regard, continued efforts by Member States to help close the digital divide are directly relevant to the Department's efforts to improve and expand its radio services to clients in many regions of the world.

VII. Conclusion

31. Given its universal reach, as well as its cost-effectiveness, radio remains the most potent means of communication for the United Nations, particularly in developing countries. The daily news broadcasts have revolutionized the approach of the Organization in reaching its global constituencies. The encouragement and, often, practical assistance of Member States have enabled the United Nations to successfully tap the inherent potential of this medium. Indeed, as the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information has said, the programmes of United Nations Radio have served "to open up the Organization, to make its work more transparent and to give it a local voice, which is the aim of all our information activities".

32. The active participation and the figures provided by partner stations in the survey indicate the great demand for authoritative news broadcasts emanating from the United Nations. This is immensely gratifying, as is the fact that some 133 million listeners around the globe hear United Nations material at least once a week. Clearly, if all partner stations, as well as short wave broadcasters, satellite networks and affiliated stations, were surveyed, the weekly audience for United Nations Radio material would increase by many millions of listeners. In addition, it is important to point out that United Nations Radio regularly receives letters from listeners all over the world passionately expressing their appreciation of its programmes.

33. A firm mandate from Member States to continue this international broadcasting capacity will ensure that radio continues to contribute, cost-effectively, to the overall goal of the Department of Public Information, namely, to generate understanding about the United Nations and all the priority issues and concerns that Member States of the Organization have said the world must be informed about.

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Consideration of reports submitted by the Secretary-General

Modernization and integrated management of United Nations libraries

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The Steering Committee for the Modernization and Integrated Management of United Nations Libraries was established in January 2003 as a measure to improve the provision of library services, as called for in the report of the Secretary-General on United Nations reform (A/57/387 and Corr.1). Chaired by the Department of Public Information, and working through coordinated management and collaborative policy-making, the Committee will aim to facilitate interdependency and foster initiatives to create a dynamic, synergistic and fully functional network of library services throughout the Organization.

* A/AC.198/2003/1.

03-27311 (E) 120303

I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 56/253 of 24 December 2001, requested the Secretary-General to conduct an in-depth review of library activities at Headquarters and United Nations Offices at Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi, as well as at the regional commissions. The review, which was subsequently conducted in 2002, identified two major areas requiring special attention, namely, the lack of integrated management and the need for modernization.

2. In response to those findings, the Secretary-General, in action 9 of his report on strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change (A/57/387 and Corr.1), proposed measures for improving the management of United Nations libraries. The Department of Public Information, which administers the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, was given a coordinating role for that purpose. The General Assembly, in its resolution 57/300 of 20 December 2002, took note of those proposals and requested the Secretary-General to submit a report for further consideration by the relevant United Nations bodies, including the Committee on Information at its twenty-fifth session. The present report has been prepared in compliance with that request.

II. Steering Committee for the Modernization and Integrated Management of United Nations Libraries

3. The Deputy Secretary-General convened a meeting by videoconference in January 2003 to discuss how to implement the proposals of the Secretary-General. Participants included the Under-Secretaries-General of the Department of Public Information and the Department of Management, and senior officials from their departments, as well as the heads or representatives of the United Nations Offices at Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi, the Executive Secretaries, or their representatives, of the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, and a representative of the Rector of the United Nations University in Tokyo.

4. As a first step, the Deputy Secretary-General proposed the establishment of a steering committee to develop and implement strategies to achieve a more modern, efficient and accessible system of library services within the United Nations. Support was unanimous and she therefore officially established the Steering Committee for the Modernization and Integrated Management of United Nations Libraries, to be chaired by the Department of Public Information.

A. Mandate

5. While respecting fully the immediate priorities and individual capacities of the member libraries, the Steering Committee is mandated to discuss and agree upon policies to facilitate the complex transition from self-sufficiency to interdependency and foster initiatives to create a dynamic, synergistic and fully functional library network. Furthermore, in order to expand existing cooperative strategies for collection development and resource sharing, and to develop new strategies, the Committee will encourage a shift from a culture of "ownership" to one of access.

6. It is envisaged that the work of the Committee will concentrate on the following areas: inter-library management initiatives promoting collaborative and coordinated activities, products and services; optimization of financial resources; sharing best practices and lessons learned; expanded technical assistance programmes for the small, field and depository libraries; archival storage; digitization; bibliographic control of United Nations documentation; production of multilingual web pages and portals; collaborative reference services; database management and maintenance; strategies for marketing library outputs and services; staff training and development; and staff mobility.

7. The Steering Committee will also play a leading role in ensuring that all libraries of the Organization bring their specialized expertise in information management to bear in the development of all knowledge-sharing initiatives of the Organization.

B. Operating model

8. The Steering Committee, under the chairmanship of the Director, Outreach Division, Department of Public Information, will meet regularly to set priorities and policies. The head of each United Nations Office will appoint a permanent representative to the Committee, which will report to the Deputy Secretary-General, through the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information. The first meeting of the Committee will be held by videoconference in March 2003.

III. Conclusions

9. **The Steering Committee will work to leverage existing investments in human, financial, technological and information resources in the system of library services in the United Nations and to blend traditional library functions with advanced technologies. Through coordinated management, it is expected that economies and efficiencies will be achieved and services optimized to strengthen the outreach of the Organization.**

10. **A primary aim of the Committee will be to promote and expedite projects that will provide instantaneous, electronic access to a seamlessly integrated, coordinated and interdependent global repository of intellectual resources for users, widely distributed around the world.**

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Activities of the United Nations Communications Group in 2002

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The United Nations Communications Group, which replaced the Joint United Nations Information Committee, was formed in January 2002 at the initiative of the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, United Nations Department of Public Information, as a flexible and substance-driven mechanism for inter-agency coordination in the field of public information and communications. It held its first annual session in Rome on 27 and 28 June 2002, set up several issue-specific task forces to coordinate the implementation of communications strategies of the United Nations system and convened regular weekly meetings at United Nations Headquarters. The Communications Group, which has evolved into a common information and communications platform for the United Nations system, has brought greater focus to the substance of these activities while enhancing the harmonization of policies and programmes.

03-26492 (E) 100303

I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 57/130 B of 11 December 2002, encouraged the Department of Public Information to play a key role in the newly established United Nations Communications Group and requested the Secretary-General to report on its activities to the Committee on Information at its consecutive sessions. The present report, which covers the activities of the United Nations Communications Group during 2002, has been prepared in response to that request.

2. The United Nations Communications Group, which replaced the Joint United Nations Information Committee, was formed in January 2002 at the initiative of the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, Department of Public Information, as a flexible and substance-driven mechanism for inter-agency coordination in the field of public information and communications. In addition to holding an annual session, the Group has created a number of issue-specific task forces for coordinating the planning and implementation of joint communications strategies on priority issues. It is also responsible for coordinating the joint participation of the United Nations system in the 2005 World Exposition (Expo 2005) in Japan. The Group holds weekly meetings at United Nations Headquarters to discuss issues of current interest. Its secretariat is provided by the Department of Public Information.

II. First annual session

3. The first annual session of the United Nations Communications Group, hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) at its headquarters in Rome on 27 and 28 June 2002, served as a means of promoting a common sense of purpose within the information community of the United Nations system. Chaired by the Director of Information of FAO, it provided a forum for a broad discussion and policy formulation on general, as well as specific, communications and public information issues. A total of 27 United Nations specialized agencies, programmes and offices were represented at the meeting.

4. In the course of its discussion, the members of the Communications Group identified two major communications challenges: developing a flexible and task-oriented approach to coordinating their information work; and finding new, more effective tools to tell their story in an increasingly competitive media environment. The Group also identified the following elements as key to formulating an information strategy for the United Nations and its system of organizations:

(a) The Millennium Declaration and Millennium development goals should serve as the framework for overall communications strategies. At a minimum, the following four major issues, also identified by the Secretary-General as his priorities for action during his second term, should be at the centre of this framework: eradication of poverty; conflict prevention; sustainable development; and the HIV/AIDS epidemic;

(b) Issues of global concern were clearly connected with the twin strategic objectives of peace and security, and development;

(c) In the post-11 September political environment, the Western press, especially in the United States, appeared to be placing a strong emphasis on

terrorism. The information programmes of the United Nations system, therefore, must adapt to this situation by developing strategies to make other compelling issues accessible to the media and the public.

5. The members of the Communications Group decided that it was necessary for the organizations of the United Nations system to ensure their common response without losing their separate voices. They agreed to continue using the current flexible, issue-driven format of the United Nations Communications Group as the common platform for bringing partners closer, including in crisis management, whenever required and as early as possible. It was recommended that the chair of the Group at its 2002 annual session bring to the attention of the High-level Committee on Programmes of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination the need for involving communications experts in the strategic planning and overall decision-making process to promote a culture of communications.

6. The Group also decided to continue with its current format, which included an annual session at different locations under a rotating chairmanship, weekly meetings at United Nations Headquarters and issue-specific task forces. It was agreed that the second annual session of the Communications Group would take place in New York in June 2003, under the chairmanship of the Director of the Communications Office, United Nations Development Programme.

7. At the request of the Communications Group secretariat, the Evaluation and Communications Research Unit of the Department of Public Information conducted a survey of participants in the first annual session of the Communications Group. Participants who had previously attended meetings of the Joint United Nations Information Committee widely praised the reorganization of the platform of inter-agency cooperation on public information. Every respondent agreed that the current format was a clear improvement over the previous structural arrangement. Participants rated the opportunity to network with their colleagues as either very useful (60 per cent) or useful (40 per cent) for their work. In terms of the session as a forum for identifying common problems, more than 60 per cent considered it very useful; 30 per cent said it was useful; and fewer than 10 per cent did not find it particularly useful. According to respondents, the session was less successful at presenting best practices, an area in which the Group is determined to improve. While 70 per cent gave a positive rating, almost 30 per cent did not find it useful in this regard.

III. Activities of the United Nations Communications Group task forces

8. The United Nations Communications Group created four issue-specific task forces in 2002. As indicated below, two of them have completed their work, and the other two are engaged in ongoing activities.

Task Force on the International Conference on Financing for Development

9. The Task Force on the International Conference on Financing for Development developed a comprehensive communications strategy on the International Conference, held in Monterrey, Mexico, from 18 to 22 March 2002. These efforts

were strengthened by a one-page summary of key messages developed by the Department of Public Information in consultation with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization. The message sheet was circulated a few weeks before the conference to members of the Communications Group. A press kit, developed by the Department of Public Information in consultation with the Task Force, provided succinct and useful background information for journalists about the key issues.

Task Force on the World Summit on Sustainable Development

10. As a result of the efforts of the Task Force on the World Summit on Sustainable Development, it was possible to establish greater cooperation between the media teams of the United Nations family both before and during the World Summit, which was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 August to 4 September 2002. The Task Force formulated common messages for the media on key issues addressed at the Summit, which gave uniformity and cohesion to the information efforts of the United Nations system. For the first time, a "bullpen" was organized in the Media Centre for the information officers from 20 United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies, where workspace was provided with telephone lines and high-speed network-based Internet access. The members of the Group also cooperated on a number of promotional activities, including the United Nations system exhibit and the billboard campaign in Johannesburg.

Task Force on the International Year of Freshwater 2003 and Task Force on the World Summit on the Information Society

11. The Communications Group has convened the Task Force on the International Year of Freshwater 2003 to coordinate promotional activities and generate synergy within the United Nations system in relation to the observance of the Year. The Task Force on the World Summit on the Information Society is engaged in coordinating activities in support of the World Summit, the first phase of which will be held from 10 to 12 December 2003 in Geneva, and the second in 2005 in Tunis. Led by the Department of Public Information, both Task Forces have continued to meet at United Nations Headquarters. Those away from Headquarters are also able to participate in their meetings via videoconferencing or teleconferencing. The objectives of the Task Forces include developing common messages for the media, establishing a calendar of activities and coordinating a uniform promotional campaign at United Nations Headquarters and throughout the United Nations system.

IV. Joint participation in the 2005 World Exposition, Aichi, Japan

12. The Secretary-General, in his letter of 31 May 2001 addressed to the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations, accepted in principle the invitation by Japan to participate in the 2005 World Exposition (Aichi, Japan, 25 March to 25 September 2005). The Joint United Nations Information Committee, at its 2001 annual session, had agreed to recommend the designation of the United Nations Department of Public Information as the lead agency for the organization of the joint United Nations pavilion at Expo 2005. Later, the Director-General of the

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in a letter addressed to the Secretary-General on 5 November 2002, expressed interest in accepting an invitation from the Government of Japan to present its activities in an independent pavilion. Shortly thereafter, the members of the Communications Group reviewed the question of United Nations participation at Expo 2005 and reiterated their desire to present the United Nations system in a joint pavilion. They agreed that, rather than having two different pavilions, UNESCO should be invited to assume the lead in organizing a common United Nations pavilion. On the basis of this recommendation, the Secretary-General invited UNESCO to take full responsibility for coordinating the participation of the United Nations system in Expo 2005, including the design, construction and staffing of the United Nations exhibit. In accordance with the 1999 guidelines for the participation of the United Nations system in international exhibitions, UNESCO was to be responsible for negotiating the funding and related matters with the Government of Japan. The Director-General of UNESCO, in a letter to the Secretary-General dated 16 December 2002, accepted the invitation and appointed a coordinator for Expo 2005.

V. Weekly meetings and other ongoing activities

13. During 2002, the Communications Group, under the chairmanship of the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, Department of Public Information, held regular weekly meetings at United Nations Headquarters. These meetings provided a forum for consultation and coordination on United Nations activities of common concern, including the World Summit on Sustainable Development; the Special Court for Sierra Leone; the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East; the Millennium development goals; the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission; the reconstruction of Afghanistan; the Global Compact; United Nations reform; the twenty-fourth session of the Committee on Information; the special session of the General Assembly on Children; and web-related communications issues, such as Internet branding and a central Internet portal. The Group also received briefings from officials visiting Headquarters.

14. The secretariat of the Communications Group, with the assistance of the Strategic Communications Division of the Department of Public Information, prepared an annual calendar of major United Nations system activities of interest to world media. The calendar, which is the only annual listing of system-wide activities, was based on input received from the members of the Communications Group, and is periodically updated. In addition, the Communications Group secretariat, with the help of the Web Site Section of the Department of Public Information, has designed a new web site for posting all documents of the Group, including minutes and the annual calendar. The password-protected web site became operational at the beginning of 2003.

VI. Observations

15. By evolving into a flexible but task-oriented common information and communications platform of the United Nations system, the United Nations Communications Group has been able to put more focus on substance and to achieve

greater effectiveness in policy harmonization and programme cooperation in areas of system-wide concern. This format has allowed the communications experts within the system to coordinate messages, share ideas, exchange experiences and assess their performance. It has also contributed to the achievement of a much-needed goal, which is for the United Nations system to speak with one voice.